OtherHand

The Hunt for the Death Valley Germans

This is the tale of what for me was a rather remarkable adventure. It was assembled on the basis of my personal recollection and experience, emails, GPS logs and some official documents. It represents solely the perspective and opinions of myself, in my more lucid moments. It is in no way intended to represent the position of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, nor any other agency mentioned. Further, my usual writing style tends to be somewhat lighthearted and flippant, which would be somewhat at odds with the serious and tragic nature of the incident being reported. I have attempted to remain sensitive to the underlying events, yet retain a certain level of casual narrative that some might find entertaining. And if not entertaining, then at least informative.

As part of due diligence I need to add an important note. In the past I've kept certain locations regarding this incident fairly well cloaked for a variety of reasons, explained as part of the narrative. Mainly, it's a very difficult, even dangerous, area to get into, and there are a lot of armchair desert adventurers possibly tempted to try it. However in the interest of completeness I've decided to include images showing the GPS tracks of the various search efforts. I've also refrained from my favorite trick of photo-reversing images of the site. What you see it what it was. At this point, there is nothing left at the site for souvenir hunters, so I see no need for maintaining its secrecy. Anyone reading of the difficulties encountered in this search should consider any visitation very carefully. As a point of reference, if you're not physically capable of doing a day hike to the top of Mount Whitney and back, and aren't a skilled, off-trail hiker, you should stay out of this area. My opinion, anyway. That's a measure of how hard it is to get into the area on foot (and out, safely!). At this point I know the location and surroundings probably better than anyone, and I'm **not** going back. The area scares me just a bit.

- Introduction, July 23, 1996
- The original search and interim years
- I get sucked in (It never seems crazy at the beginning)
- A pretty stupid day hike, 10/27/2009
- I concoct a theory
- “Tom, we have some bones here....”, 11/11 – 12/2009
- Intermission
- The Big Search, 12/5 – 6/2009
- The craziest day hike, ever, 3/23/2010
- Up the N3 canyon, 4/15/2010
- Water Carriers, 10/30/2010
- A whole lotta nuthin’, 11/13-14/2010
- Epilogue